

The Ames Intelligencer

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■ The Ames Intelligencer was the first newspaper in the city of Ames ■

Behind the Badge: The Evolution of Law Enforcement in Ames

By Donna Cipolloni and Nick Howell, Curators

The following article summarizes an exhibit featured at The Story Center Museum, June 3 - September 10, 2000.

Introduction

Nationwide, law enforcement has undergone many changes. In the city of Ames, those changes dated from the late 19th Century (The Political Era) when the role of the police was maintaining order; through the mid 20th Century (The Traditional Era) when emphasis shifted to crime-fighting; on up to the present method of investigating problems as well as incidents to help prevent crime before it happens (The Community-Policing Era).

The Political Era: 1870-1940 "Maintaining Order"

On January 22, 1870, W.G. Wright was appointed the first town marshal for the newly incorporated Ames, IA.

Founded in 1864, Ames was still in its infancy, its growth aided considerably by the presence of the railroad. At the time, the earliest town marshals were responsible for maintaining the order of the town as defined by its prominent citizens and businessmen.

Their function was to control crime and disorder and their relationship with the community was close and personal with those in political favor and indifferent or hostile to those not in favor. Their measure of success was the prominent citizens' satisfaction with how they maintained acceptable social behavior.

For Wright, himself a businessman who owned a hardware/cutlery shop, maintaining order in a town whose population was 636 meant nothing more than enforcing the "stove pipe law"; keeping chickens from running at large; catching and identifying all horses, mules and colts running loose at night; and enforcing the dog ordinance and the "no firecrackers" ordinance.



By the time William Anthony "Big Bill" Ricketts took office in 1896, Ames' population had nearly quadrupled and the proliferation of the railroad presented a whole new set of problems.

Ricketts' chief task as town marshal was to maintain order by untangling brawlers, apprehending thieves, locking up drunks, and keeping the hobo population to a minimum.

By 1911, hoboes were a constant menace and that year, Ames city officials added six ball and chain shackles to be worn by the hoboes while carrying out Marshal Ricketts' "city beautification program", which put the men to work cleaning up the streets of Ames.

In May 1915, one hobo carried the dreaded smallpox disease into Ames. Marshal Ricketts diagnosed the case and hurried the man to a secluded spot while authorities were notified. The stockyards, where the man had slept, were fumigated. The marshal's actions likely prevented a smallpox outbreak within the city of Ames.

Big Bill Ricketts served 26 years as town marshal from 1896-1904 and again from 1910-1916, and as multi-term sheriff of Story County. He received his first star under Mayor Henry Wilson and served as an officer under Mayors Smith, Tilden, Cramer, Thompson and Sheldon.

The first officer of Ames to wear an official police uniform, Ricketts died at his home in Nevada on September 18, 1922 from complications following a bout with ptomaine poisoning. At the time of his death, he was a candidate for re-election as Story County Sheriff.

The Infamous Chief Willey

Fred W. Willey first served as town marshal from 1904-1908 and was again named Chief of Police on May 2, 1916 after working eight years as a detective for the Northwestern Railroad, where he was considered one

of the best men on the force. The population of Ames was nearly 6,000 with a college enrollment of 4,000.

At the time of his appointment, it was believed that Willey was the ideal man for the job based on his past qualifications and natural aptitude for the position.

On September 30, 1919, Chief Willey fell out of favor with the city of Ames. Angry that a janitor had shown up for work drunk, the chief attacked the man in his office at city hall, knocking him out of a chair and stamping his face with his foot.

On October 13, 1919, Chief Willey handed his resignation to Mayor E.H. Graves. It became effective at noon the same day.

A Change on the Horizon

By 1911, approximately 600,000 cars were being operated in the United States; the Titanic sank in 1912; the world was at war; Prohibition was enacted in 1920; the stock market crashed in 1929; the Great Depression struck in the early 30s; Bonnie and Clyde-like gangs terrorized small town banks and rural farmsteads; the Hindenburg went down in 1937.

To law enforcement officers located in the small towns throughout the Midwest, the first few decades of the 20th Century were years of bootleggers, transients, panhandlers, thieves, and national sensationalism.

Following the resignation of F.W. Willey and after serving less than one year on the force, William J. Cure was appointed Chief of Police in 1919. He would remain in that position until his retirement in 1945.



Chief Cure (center) and his men.

Bootleggers and bank robbers were the order of the day for Chief Cure and his fellow officers. By 1931, Ames population had passed 10,000 and college enrollment was nearly 6,000. The police force numbered eight men, divided into two shifts.

An example of how the business community supported the department is evidenced by the fact that the entire salary of one patrolman and half the salaries of two others were paid by volunteer contributions among merchants.

The department was equipped with two automobiles, owned one machine gun and various high-powered rifles and sawed-off shotguns. Any weapons apprehended during arrests were added to the department's arsenal.

More than once during his tenure, Cure was involved in shoot-outs and fist-fights; he was hit by a speeding car during a road block and was involved in a plane crash. But in a 1945 article, Cure reflected that most of his trouble came from the common drunk.

The Traditional Era: 1940-1995 "Crime Fighting"

The next few decades brought more sophisticated crime, criminals and weapons. The role of police had begun changing slowly from maintaining order to fighting crime. This change began with the creation of private detectives, often ex-criminals, who worked on a contingency fee basis for individuals who suffered losses. Over time, these detectives were absorbed in to municipal police forces and paid a regular salary.

The theory of the day was that fast response time to incidents resulted in more arrests and less risk or injury to victims. Police efforts centered on gathering more evidence, solving more crimes, and making more arrests. Also, responsibility for prosecuting criminals shifted from the wronged private citizen to the professional prosecutor. As a result, police were increasingly influenced by legal restrictions developed to control police relations with suspected criminals.

The police themselves became more sophisticated. Formal training was introduced; education was encouraged as universities began offering related degrees; crime specialization occurred; and science and technology revolutionized the tools of the trade.

The face of the nation was changing as well. Civil Rights came to the forefront; the Vietnam War raged from the late 60s to early 70s; the drug culture age was dawning; urban violence was growing; authority was questioned; and the Women's Movement was underway.

Police authority now came from the law, and department rules and regulations. Their function was strictly crime control with a hierarchical, centralized and bureaucratic command. They were statistics-driven with success measured by call response times and reported crime rates.

The Sixties

At this time, the U.S. Supreme Court, under the guidance of Chief Justice Earl Warren, centered on the protection of the rights of the individual and handed down the Miranda Warning. Rulings were also passed tightening the restrictions on Search Warrants and testimony by expert witnesses; forcing police to become more professional and knowledgeable of the law.

In the late 60s, the portable radio took police officers off the streets and put them into their cars. Thus began an alienation from the community that would take decades to recognize.

In 1968, the Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) began and mandated training became the norm. In 1969, Police Chief A.E. Siedemann graduated from the FBI National Academy in Washington, D.C.

The Seventies

Ames population was 39,505 on May 22, 1970 when a bomb exploded outside a barred jail window at police headquarters, injuring nine; two seriously. No arrests were ever made. A number of months later, a suspect in the case accidentally blew himself up in a failed bombing attempt in the state of Minnesota.



Federal government monies became available to local police forces for use in purchasing needed equipment such as radios and computers and to increase the numbers of officers on the force. Officers returning from the Vietnam War were taking advantage of the GI Bill to obtain law enforcement-related college degrees.

Chief Siedelmann

In the mid-70s, an Altoona woman alleged she was denied a job application as patrol officer because of her height, and charged that the height/weight limits mandated by the ILEA were discriminatory against women. By the beginning of 1976, those limitations were no longer in effect. In 1978, Ames had its first female patrol officer.

The Eighties

In 1980, Ames population numbered 45,775. As criminals became smarter, heavy emphasis was placed on specialization in crime areas.

In 1985, The Emergency Response Team was founded. The ERT is a tactical team trained to handle hostage situations or barricaded subjects. In summer 1986, the Ames Police Department introduced its first bicycle patrol, whose primary function is to enforce bicycle traffic regulations and patrol parks and swimming pools.

May 3, 1988 marked the first VEISHEA riot. Police were untrained and ill-equipped to handle the estimated crowd of 8,000. Even with all Ames police officers, 50 state troopers and 20 sheriff's deputies, they were not able to control the rioters. Ames police wore borrowed helmets from a local Army reserve group. Twenty-six Ames officers were injured, some needed medical treatment.

In July 1988, City Council approved funds allocated for the purchase of riot gear. In August 1988, instructors from the Corrections Academy in Mount Pleasant trained Ames and ISU officers on the proper techniques and formations used to disperse crowds.

By the late 80s, the Automatic Fingerprint Identification System was in place. Using computers, every fingerprint submitted to the state of Iowa could be run through a database and matched.

In April 1989, the Special Operations Unit was begun. It includes the Hotel/Motel Squad that works with local hotel/motel personnel educating them in suspicious activity. The unit also provides security for visiting dignitaries and is responsible for the cataloguing and tracking of all evidence.

The Nineties

In March 1990, when Ames police switched to a new state-of-the-art communications center that included 911 service, the city's population totaled 47,198.

In June 1990, the police department began its own K9 division with the dog primarily being used for building searches and rescue. The program lasted about seven

years before being discontinued due to expense. Ames police now utilize the dog from the County Sheriff's Department, if needed.

May 1992 marked the first use of tear gas during a VEISHEA riot. Utilizing the training and equipment they received after the '88 riot, it only took 27 Ames officers three hours to move and disperse the crowd.

The Field Training Officer Program, started in 1993, provides three months of additional on-the-job training for new Ames officers. Over that period of time, their work responsibility is increased and is evaluated by a certified Field Training Officer.

Throughout the decades of The Traditional Era, many scientific and technological advances revolutionized policing. Some of these breakthroughs included: computers, electronic listening devices, lasers, radar, body armor, semi-automatic weapons, and advances in forensics (hair, blood, fiber analysis) and DNA evidence.

Over time, studies began to show that crime rates were not dropping, but actually continued to rise. It became obvious that if responding to crime incidents was all that the police did, then the community problems that caused many of these incidents would never be addressed, incidents would continue and their numbers would possibly rise. The police became disconnected from the community and community satisfaction dropped.



Bicycle Patrol

The Community-Policing Era: 1997-Present "Community Involvement"

Community-oriented policing means changing the daily work of the police to include investigating problems as well as incidents. It means cultivating the goodwill of community groups and dealing with citizens face-to-face. It means giving individual patrol officers a broad range of responsibilities, to find and understand the problems that create disorder and crime, and to deal cooperatively with other public and private agencies to help with these problems. In essence, it means working with the "good guys" and not just against the "bad guys".

On January 15, 1994, an article in The Daily Tribune by Police Chief Dennis Ballantine outlined the concept of community policing and his goal to have Ames officers get more involved with the citizens in helpful, not confrontational, situations. A five-year plan outlined by police department employees covered a wide variety of goals, including specific tasks meant to improve communications both inside and outside the department.

In 1997, the first Community Resource Officer was appointed. The duties of this officer include developing and implementing community-oriented programs, meeting face-to-face with community leaders and neighborhood groups, and opening a line of communication between the citizens of Ames and the police department.

A sampling of the current community-oriented policing programs currently in operation by the Ames Police Department include:

Outreach Program. Involves at-risk youth on juvenile probation doing community service.

"Officer Bob" Program. The school liaison officer visits students in the Ames schools, discussing everything from bicycle safety to the effects of drug abuse.

Citizen Police Academy. An 11-week program that gives residents experience in police training. The program allows both officers and citizens to understand how/why things are done.



Shop With a Cop. Using community donations, officers donate time to take underprivileged kids shopping at Christmas. Over 150 kids participated in 1999.

Block Party Program. Upon request, an officer will attend block parties and socialize with citizens. Information obtained in casual conversations has resulted in the arrest of offenders.

Channel 12 Community Access. Various cable television programs produced by the department show the policies and procedures of certain police actions. All shows feature scenarios and provide public information. One program, *Ames Most Wanted*, resulted in 37 arrests last year.

Policing Today

In Ames today, police authority comes from the law, police professionalism and community support. Their basic function is crime prevention, crime control and problem solving. They use beat integrity and responsibility, "team" policing, patrols, and neighborhood partnerships. Success is measured by increased quality of our neighborhoods and citizen satisfaction. Their effectiveness depends on public cooperation.

Only in effect since 1997, the history of community-oriented policing in Ames has just begun to be written.

Research Sources: Ames Public Library, Daily Tribune, Ames Police Department, Annals of Iowa (1970 article by Linda Ricketts Neal), Atlantic Monthly, March 1982 (James Wilson, George Kelling article), Farwell Brown

News News News News

■ Very Special Thanks

- Many thanks go to Mary Walter, Ames for donating storage space to AHA for the past seven years. Mary's space allowed us to consolidate Association materials and to begin historic collection archiving activities.

- Many thanks go to Karen and Maggie Seyde at Sevde Transfer and Storage for providing an interim solution to the AHA storage problem. The Seydes have loaned a temperature-controlled area to the Association until November 1st. The search for a long-term facility in which to house collection materials continues.

- Many thanks go to Bob Lewis, Ames, for his donation of a modem so that The Story Center can go on-line. Watch for publication of an e-mail address and a website URL in future issues of the newsletter.

- Many thanks go to the ISU Community Credit Union for their donation of a copy machine to AHA. In addition to fulfilling office needs, the copier can be loaded with archival paper so that some fragile documents can be copied and preserved.

- Many thanks go to Peggy Baer, Ames, for donating an 8-foot ladder to the Story Center. The ladder will be especially invaluable during exhibit installations.

■ Hoggatt Open by Appointment

Hoggatt School's weekend summer hours are now over, however, the schoolhouse is available by appointment for tours in September and October. To arrange a tour, call Carole Jensen, 233-2431. The school closes Nov. 1.

■ Bauge Log Home Progress

A work-day organized by Rollie and Willie Struss on July 8 garnered the help of nine volunteers who painted most of the interior walls and ceilings of the main level of the home. Additional work has been accomplished on chinking the exposed logs. Cooler weather will allow more to be done on the cabin this fall. To lend a hand, contact Rollie at 232-0865. Rollie hopes to complete the log home restoration this year.

■ Story Center New Exhibit

Starting September 13 at The Story Center, 417 Douglas is "Educating Through The Arts: A Colorful History." The exhibit will feature a history of the arts in Ames, an overview of the Art Educators of Iowa, and histories of individual arts organizations.

■ Upcoming Programs

Mark your calendars for these programs:

Tuesday, Sept. 19, 2-3:30pm

"Snake Oil" Medicine of the 1800s and early 1900s by Don & Elaine Faas, at Mary Greeley Medical Ctr Aud.

Saturday, Oct. 14, 10:30am-noon

The quarterly Story County Historical Alliance meeting will be hosted by the Slater Area Historical Association. The meeting will be at the Slater log cabin (corner of Third Ave. and Benton Street). Food will be catered for a noon lunch. The public is welcome.

■ AHA Wins HRDP Grant

Ames Heritage has received a \$5,500 Historic Resources Development Program grant from the state of Iowa. HRDP is funded through REAP. The grant will allow AHA to hire curatorial interns and purchase archival quality storage supplies to catalog and store several specific collections now held by private individuals. Work on the project will begin in January 2001 and must be completed by January 15, 2003.

■ Museum Attendance – 1st Year

Volunteer Coordinator, Carole Jensen, reported on the total museum attendance for the first year of operation. The museum opened in mid-June 1999 and has been open four days/week for a total of 16 hours/week (except when closed for holidays). Visitor total was 2,514.

■ We Do Tours & Programs

Groups, clubs and organizations may request a hosted tour of current exhibits at The Story Center by calling the museum at 232-2148. Association volunteers will also present programs at sites other than the museum.

■ Collections Update

From Jean Jonas, Curator

Many thanks to our most recent donors:

- Burr McFarland - teacher's bell for Hoggatt School
- Edith Hewitt - chaplain's organ, once used by an ISU fraternity
- Jean Stange - "At the Squaw and the Skunk", book by Gladys Meads
- Mary Greeley Medical Center - display case, exhibit of infant respirator invented in Ames
- Octagon Center for the Arts – suitcase; framed document signed by Thomas Jefferson
- Firststar Bank - folding table
- Olive's - display cases

Our collection continues to grow and we need a larger, permanent home for it. Please call Jean Jonas at 292-9643 regarding any possible sites. The ideal place will be temperature-controlled, 450 sq. feet or larger, and easily accessible (wide doorways, on street-level or have elevator access).

Special thanks to Karen and Maggie Sevde who are donating temporary storage space during this transition. Their space will protect our collection and give us the time we need to continue to search for the right facility.

Thank you to the volunteers who helped with moving the collection this summer:

Peggy Baer, Eldree Baer, Bob Cipolloni, Jim Graham, Mark Hamin, Jennifer Harris, Blake Hendrickson, Nick Howell, Carole Jensen, Laura Jonas, Joe Jonas, Bruce Kellogg, Bill LaGrange, Aaron Newton, Willie Struss, Rollie Struss, Kathy Svec, Don Wirth, Sharon Wirth and Wendy Wirth.

Committee Meets to Brainstorm Exhibit Ideas

In June, an AHA committee met to explore a number of ideas for future exhibits at The Story Center. A summary of their thoughts follows, grouped by major themes. Ideas from AHA members are also welcome.

Deep History

Native American life and culture; Archeology & anthropology of the Ames area; Natural & environmental history of landscape; The shape of settlement

Early Ames

Impact of Civil War [diaries?]; Impact of slavery (Underground Railroad); Bauge Home; Newspapering in Ames - Intelligencer/Tribune

Here Yesterday, Gone Today

Vanished Ames; Ghost towns of Story County; Ghost stories; Cemeteries

Downtown

Historical pillars/tiles – elaborate on people, places, things depicted; Main St. businesses - Stores (hardware, grocery, clothing, millinery), Restaurants, Banks; 'Second Stories'; Digging and Re-digging Downtown

Important Figures and Families

Famous Visitors; Famous Native Sons and Daughters; Martin and Shipp families [race relations]

Stories of the Historians

Farwell Brown; Dorothy Schwieder; Gladys Dodds Mead

Education

Ames High School; Roosevelt Elementary School; Hoggatt School; Country schools/one-room schoolhouses; A student-proposed and -produced exhibit

Experiment and Extension

Agriculture; Engineering

Buildings

Construction experiments; House plans; Historic places

Medical Technology/Health Care

Mary Greeley Hospital; McFarland Clinic; Nursing, dentistry, pharmacy; Veterinary medicine

Public Safety, Public Services

Garbage collection and resource recovery; Fire fighting, inspection, and prevention; Disaster or crisis response - Disease, Drought, Flood, storm

Leisure and Socializing

Entertainment – Theaters, Dance Halls, Musical Venues, Fairs and Festivals, Toys and Games; Sport and Recreation - Parks and Pools, Fields, Arenas, Courts, Spectator sports; Community clubs and voluntary associations

Traces and Records of the Past

Letters, telephone, email, stamps; Portrait sittings to portable cameras/camcorders; Manuscript, typing, printing, word processing

Miscellaneous

Ames from A-Z; WOI radio and television; Cycling events and equipment

Proposed Exhibit Schedule

From the brainstormed list, selections were made and exhibits scheduled for the next two years. Selection was based on the known availability of artifacts and research materials, and identifiable researchers and curators.

First Round (January through April 2001)

Bringing the Past to Life

- Recollections: Stories of the Historian(s)
- Restorations: Bauge Home, Hoggatt School or Ames Bandshell
- Remembrances: Ames letters, diaries, photographs, memorabilia

Second Round (May through August, 2001)

Deep History/Ames before Ames

- Natural History
- Indigenous Life
- The Shape of Settlement

Third Round (September through December, 2001)

Here Yesterday, Gone Today

- Ghost Towns of Story County
- Vanished Ames; Cemeteries; Ghost Stories

Fourth Round (January through April, 2002)

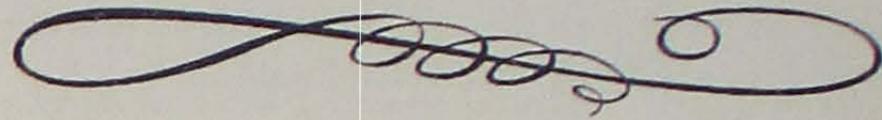
Downtown

- Historical tiles/pillars
- Businesses and Boosters
- 'Second Stories'
- Digging (and Re-digging) Downtown

Fifth Round (May through August, 2002)

Back to School

- Ames High School
- Roosevelt Elementary
- One-room schoolhouses
- ISU Education/Extension
- Student-produced exhibit



Ames Heritage Association Board: President - Kathy Svec; Vice-President - Carole Jensen; Secretary - Willie Struss; Treasurer - Bill LaGrange; Peggy Baer, Donna Cipolloni, Suann Evans, Mark Hamin, Jon Harvey, Jean Jonas, Liz Manion, Nick Howell, Rollie Struss. The Board meets monthly.

Ames Heritage Association is a legally incorporated, not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest in state and local history through the operation of three historic sites as well as publications, programs and exhibitions.

The Intelligencer is named after an early Ames newspaper and is a newsletter published three to four times a year for Association members. Direct comments or questions to the Editor, PO Box 821, Ames, Iowa 50010.

Ames Intelligencer

Ames Heritage Association

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Ames, Iowa 50010



Hoggatt School is available by appointment in September & October.

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